

Bicester Gateway - Phase 1B - Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

The revised proposals for Phase 1B of the Bicester Gateway development site will require three Ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) to be removed in order to facilitate pedestrian and cycle access into the site from the adjacent network.

Tree Survey Number	Category	Height	Single or Multi-stemmed	Stem Diameter (s) in mm	Life Stage	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Future Life Expectancy	General Observations
T6 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	B 2	16m	S	250	Early Maturity	Fair	Fair	40+ *	The B2 category trees are considered to provide a greater landscape asset by contributing to the impression of the overall landscape, than they are to have intrinsic, individual aesthetic merit or cultural value.
T7 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	B 2	16m	MS	150 150 300	Early Maturity	Fair	Fair	40+ *	
T8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	C 1	8m	S	250	Early Maturity	Poor	Poor	10+ *	

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** The CBA Survey was carried out in 2016 which is the first year that Ash Dieback Disease (now classified as Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) was detected in trees local to the proposed development site. The current prognosis for the survival of Ash trees in areas where the fungus becomes established is very poor as the fungus survives on decaying leaf litter and is therefore very difficult to control. Therefore, the future life expectancy figures suggested in the CBA Survey are now considered to be very large over-estimates.*

The survey data within the table is taken from the CBA Tree Survey of 2016. The original data set includes root protection area, branch spread and crown dimension data that has been omitted here for brevity. However, the information is available as part of the planning application submission documentation to ref: 20/00293/OUT. Category B2 trees are assessed as having mainly landscape values, rather than individual aesthetic merit or cultural values. In this case, it is because the trees attract a higher collective rating than they might as individuals. Category C1 trees are assessed as having arboricultural value only (low landscape and cultural values). Category C1 connotes unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories.

None of the trees to be removed exhibited physical defects requiring preliminary management at the time of survey.

The three trees (T6, T7 & T8) that will need to be removed in order to facilitate the proposed development are all of fair or poor quality. I concur with the CBA assessment, in that their landscape value is greater than their individual merit as aesthetic specimens or upon cultural grounds. They are adventitious, self-set trees rather than having been planted within the hedgerows intentionally as stocks, and as such they have not received any tree care throughout their development.

The landscape effect associated with the removal of these three boundary trees will be a short-term adverse effect that will quite rapidly change to a beneficial effect. First, also in the short-term, the wider site will include planting of a wider selection of landscape and amenity trees that will be chosen for the site because of their specific suitability. Carefully chosen specimens with designed planting specifications and prescribed aftercare will be superior to the removed trees across a range of measures including aesthetic appearance, disease-resistance, drought and pollution tolerance, canopy volume and season in leaf (ash is last of the native trees to put on foliage).

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Secondly, in the medium term, replacement boundary trees adjacent to the new access route will become established and perform a similar landscape function to the removed trees. The replacement trees will be selected to perform a better screening function against the busy road corridor. The ash trees to be removed are light, open-crowned and are late into leaf compared with most other species making them an unsuitable species for screening functions in the landscape.

*The future potential and life-expectancy of the three Ash trees (T6, T7 & T8 in the survey) is very likely to be severely curtailed by the increasing local presence of Ash-Dieback Disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*).*

The detailed landscape design in Reserved Matters applications will be more than able to mitigate the removals and commits the opportunity to create a substantial landscape benefit. A significant tree uplift is proposed as part of the current outline application, to be agreed at the Reserved Matters stages.

The remaining trees to be retained upon the site are not adversely impacted by the proposals and can be protected during the construction / implementation phase of the building and landscaping.

Reserved land

An area of land not included in the original CBA survey from 2016 now forms part of the current application site. This area is located to the south-west of the site and includes a now redundant sliproad to the A41 and an embankment to the road bridge across to Chesterton, west of the site that was constructed in the 1960s.

The embankment is densely populated with shrubs and immature trees. This growth comprises various species. No landscape change is proposed in this area in respect of trees. The contribution to the landscape made by these trees remains unchanged by the current planning application.

Importantly, since the current planning application proposes no development in this area, no arboricultural survey in this area is required. We enclose plan ref: PL-05 "Reserved Land" showing this area of land and confirming no development in this area, save for upgrades to the sliproad into a cycle/ footway. Should any proposals in the future relate to this land, survey work should be undertaken at that time to ensure that decision making is based on current data.

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Paul Cordle

Cordle Design, April 2020.

KEY

 Highways Land
(as Highways Engineer)



Proposed to repair Footpath and Road surface to provide new Foot/Cyclepath.

